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Baby Who Died 34 Hours After Vaccines Had Toxic Level of Aluminum in His Blood, Report Confirms

The parents of 62-day-old Sawyer learned their baby's blood contained 95 micrograms per liter of aluminum, a level that would be toxic for adults. The toxicologist who read Sawyer's report said the aluminum and antigen levels in the blood were due to the vaccines.

By **John-Michael Dumais**

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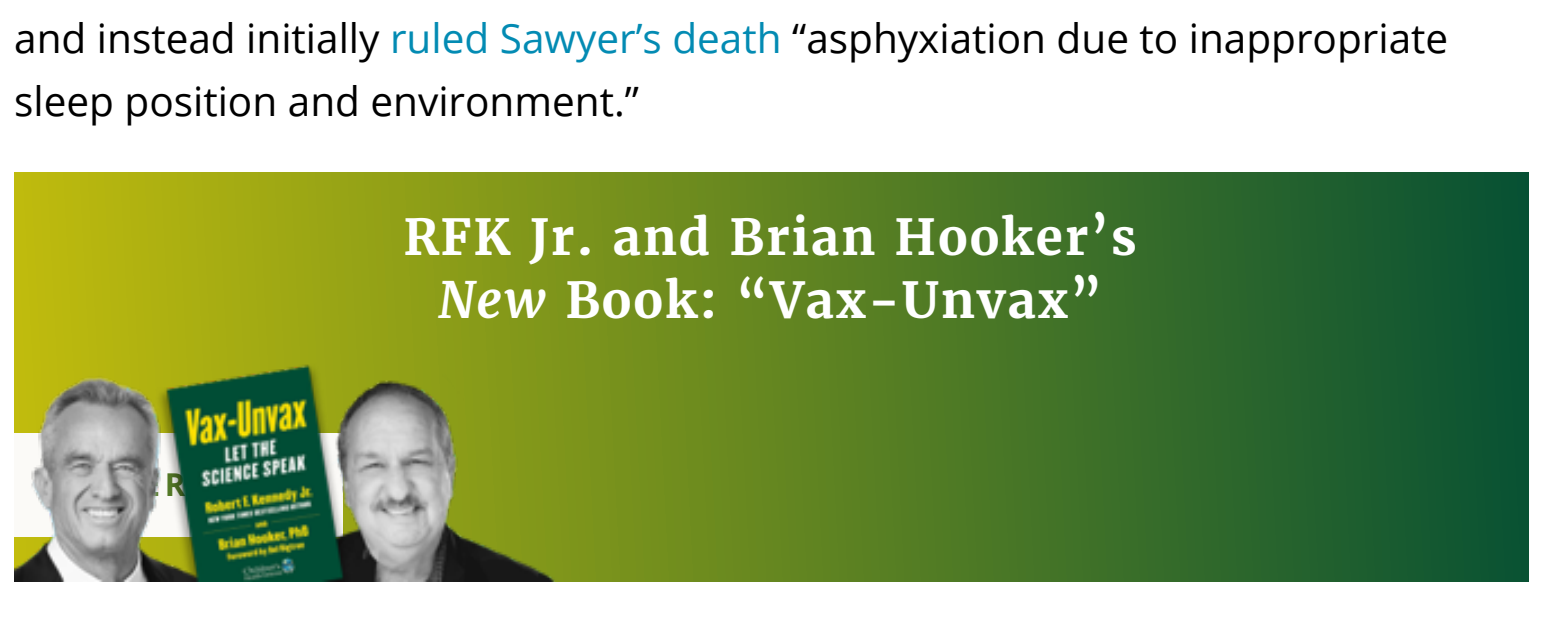
A Maine couple last week finally got the answers they'd been seeking for nearly a year, ever since their 62-day-old son, Sawyer, died Oct. 28, 2022 — 34 hours after receiving his scheduled childhood vaccines.

According to a toxicology report, Sawyer's blood contained 95 micrograms per liter of aluminum, a level that would be toxic for adults.

A toxicologist told the couple the aluminum and antigen levels in the blood were due to the vaccines. She also said a viral infection Sawyer was being treated for could have been a contributing factor.

Sawyer's parents, Melissa — a registered nurse — and her fiancé Nick shared their story last week with journalist Jennifer Margulis.

In an interview this week with The Defender, the couple detailed their search for truth, beginning with how Maine's medical examiner refused repeated requests to perform lab tests that might have shown the culpability of the vaccines — and instead initially ruled Sawyer's death "asphyxiation due to inappropriate sleep position and environment."



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The story of baby Sawyer

On Oct. 20, 2022, Melissa took Sawyer to a doctor for a persistent rash around his torso. The doctor diagnosed a viral infection, gave Melissa some medicinal cream and told her to monitor Sawyer's temperature for possible fever.

Exactly one week later, Melissa went to the same pediatrician for a baby wellness checkup, where the doctor insisted Sawyer, despite Melissa's reservations and the baby still having a rash, receive the scheduled childhood vaccines.

These included: RotaTeq (for rotavirus), Hib (for Haemophilus influenzae b), Prevnar 13 (for 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria) and Pediarix (for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and polio).

Dr. Lawrence Palevsky, a pediatrician, told The Defender, "I don't know of any official warnings against vaccinating sick children," but "there are no upsides to vaccinating a sick child. There are only downsides." He added, "And, there are no upsides to vaccinating any child."

Melissa told The Defender that, despite her medical training, she became skeptical of vaccines just two days prior when she watched a video of a toxicologist talking about the dangers of vaccines for children. She discussed the upcoming vaccinations with her fiancé, and they decided to go ahead with them.

"We were afraid that the medical system was going to judge him and judge us and not let him into school," Nick said. "We just hadn't done any research on it."

Nick has two daughters from a previous marriage, ages 11 and 19, who received all of their childhood vaccines "and nothing ever happened," he said.

After the doctor's visit, Sawyer arrived home screaming and Melissa gave him the baby Tylenol recommended by the doctor.

By the next day, the baby had calmed somewhat but was still acting "fussy and uncomfortable," so Melissa gave him more Tylenol and some expressed breastmilk.

When Nick got home from work that day, they put Sawyer into his bassinet for a nap around 5:30. By 6:15 the baby was fussing, and with some help was able to get back to sleep. He slept off and on for another four hours, while his parents kept tabs on him via his baby monitor and visits to his room.

The last time Melissa checked on Sawyer, he wasn't moving or breathing. She picked up his limp and lifeless body and started screaming. Nick rushed in to help but it was already too late.

Emergency medical technicians arrived after the couple called 911. They tried but were unable to revive Sawyer.

The county and state police also responded and, because it was an infant death, opened a formal investigation and ordered an autopsy.

Chief Medical Examiner Mark Flomenbaum performed the autopsy the next day. Although he found Sawyer to be "well developed" and without signs of injury or bruising, Flomenbaum filed a death certificate citing asphyxiation due to a "sub-optimal sleeping environment" — essentially blaming the parents.

"It was near Christmas when we got the autopsy results," Melissa told The Defender. "We read them on Christmas Eve. … We did nothing for the entire weekend."

Asked if they ever learned what the medical examiner saw to make his determination, they said no. "The only thing in his basket was the blanket he was laying on."

The police looked for evidence of child abuse or alcoholism, but quickly concluded it was an accidental death.

Melissa, grief-stricken, told everyone she could to investigate the possible role of vaccines in Sawyer's death.

She first called the medical examiner to see if he would do testing to determine if sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) was responsible, but was told there was no need "because it wouldn't show the cause of his passing," she recalled being told.

The hunt for answers

That's when the couple's hunt for answers began. "I was looking up people on the internet, on social media. I was calling any number I could find," Melisssa said.

Finally, she discovered a suite of pathology tests that could determine whether vaccines played a role in Sawyer's death.

The tests measure C-reactive protein (indicating brain inflammation), liver enzymes, aluminum and mercury in brain and blood tissue, formaldehyde and formalin (another name for formaldehyde). A cytokine panel would also identify various blood factors and vaccine titer levels.

Melissa mailed and emailed Flomenbaum's office to formally request the full battery of tests. The doctor refused, dismissing her concerns and telling her that heavy metals do not cause SIDS.

"They gave me a reason why each test didn't need to be done," she said.

Further emails to the state medical examiner's office, from both parents, have been bouncing back as "undeliverable" since.

A friend of Melissa's told her about Health Choice Maine, a statewide nonprofit working to protect health freedom and parental rights. There she met Tiffany Kreck, Health Choice Maine's executive director, who helped Melissa organize her own investigation.

"Families being bullied by a doctor or threatened with CPS [child protective services] or whatever, can reach out, and we will, to the best of our ability, help them navigate it," Kreck told The Defender.

Melissa said Tiffany gave her a list of things they had to do, "like getting reports and billing information, people to contact, and that's what I did."

Their primary goal was to find a competent pathologist to perform the lab tests Melissa had requested. They searched the entire country — even enlisting the help of Laura Bono, vice president of Children's Health Defense, Kreck told The Defender — but came up empty.

Kreck told Melissa they would not be mentioning anything about vaccines to the prospective pathologists, so they would be less likely to reject the request.

The biggest obstacle was finding a doctor who was willing to order the tests.

Her OB-GYN told her that it was "out of his scope of practice."

She called her primary care physician and told him she thought the vaccines had played a role in her son's death "and he denied it," she said. Her pediatrician also said no.

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The toxicology report and next steps

Finally, they found someone in-state who, responding to Melissa's grief, agreed to perform the tests on June 21. Although some of Sawyer's tissue samples had degraded, the pathologist was able to perform enough tests to issue a definitive report last month.

The report was technical and was not accompanied by any guidance or recommendations.

Melissa said, "They never called me and said, 'Oh, listen, this is high. This could be due to his vaccines.' We will do a VAERS [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System] report, you know, and advocate for other infants that pass away. No, we didn't get anything from them."

So they had to hire a private toxicologist who could interpret the report. That second report arrived last week.

"And she was the one that called us the other day and told us that his aluminum levels were very high," Melissa said, "and that we needed to seek some legal services."

The report showed baby Sawyer had 95 micrograms of aluminum per liter of blood, a level that would be toxic for adults. The toxicologist told the couple the aluminum and antigen levels in the blood were due to the vaccines. She also said the baby's illness could have been a contributing factor.

Kreck told Margulis, "This additional pathology report shows how much our medical examiners don't know because they won't look."

The report also showed high levels of lead, which would not be due to vaccines, the toxicologist said, and asked about lead levels in their house or water. But given that the baby had only consumed breastmilk and was not yet old enough to crawl around on the floor, the question remains open.

After receiving the confirmation about the aluminum, the couple felt "exonerated" from the implication they were responsible for Sawyer dying from asphyxiation, "but we also still feel like we failed our baby," Melissa told The Defender.

"Me being a nurse," she said, "I felt like I failed him both as a nurse and a mother."

Nick added, "From the father's standpoint, you're supposed to protect your family, and I failed at that. It weighs on me every second of the day."

Melissa and Nick are planning to file a claim with the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP). She said she still feels skeptical "because I know how the government and the medical system are."

Kreck is helping the couple prepare for the VICP meeting. "We are doing every test that we can possibly do and trying to cross all of our t's and dot all of our i's before we go into the VICP," Kreck said, "which is historically difficult and harsh on what they perceive to be SIDS cases."

The couple told The Defender they got help reporting the case to VAERS last November, but have never received any follow-up. They did, however, confirm that Sawyer's case was in the database.

Health Choice Maine is also exploring options for a lawsuit challenging the finding on the state medical examiner's death certificate.

Dealing with the grief

Just three months after the ordeal, a therapist told Melissa, who was still grieving for her child and searching for answers, that she had an "adjustment disorder."

"She was pretty much telling me that I was not adjusting to losing my son quick enough, and recommended trauma therapy," Melissa said.

She left the office crying, wondering if something was wrong with her or not being able to let go of her grief. "I haven't had good luck with therapists," she told The Defender.

"I've been going through this all on my own, trying to go through reports and all the information about my baby's life and his medical records. And I'm doing all this while trying to grieve the loss of him and it is horrifically painful," she said. "It's something no parent should ever have to go through."

One therapist told Melissa to take mood stabilizers and anti-depressants. "The mental health care system has not been very helpful in this at all," Nick added.

Nick found that going back to work and keeping busy was the most therapeutic approach for him. "Just keeping my mind focused on other stuff, you know, while carrying all that around," he said.

Nick has joined Melissa in several of her therapy sessions, which he found very helpful.

The couple found a grief support group called Empty Arms for parents who have lost a child, which has been "amazing," Melissa said. The group does a butterfly release for the deceased on Memorial Day and an annual remembrance walk.

They have found support from family members as well, although Melissa said it has been hard to talk to her family about the vaccine connection.

The couple said the loss has brought them closer together. "I couldn't keep going, fighting the fight we're fighting right now, without her," Nick said. "And you don't realize how much you love someone and just how precious life is and what you have in front of you is."

"Cherish it and love it, don't let it go," he said.

"We lost the biggest and best part of us both and if we didn't stay together, I'd feel like I was losing another piece," Melissa said.

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The couple's journey to warn others

"I just want to make other people aware and I want to put a stop to this," Melissa said.

Melissa said she warns mothers of sick children to cancel their appointments for vaccines at least until the child has recovered. She added:

> "Children do not need vaccines. And if they were to get them, they don't need them until they're at least 2 years old. The problem is, they have a blood-brain barrier that has not closed up until they're 2 years old or later.
>
> "And if you get vaccinated before 2 years old, the aluminum can cross that blood-brain barrier. That's why levels are so high and it stops respiration and causes cardiac arrest."

Nick said, "I wouldn't tell anybody 'Don't vaccinate your children.' But I would definitely say 'Do your research. Go to the end of the internet, make sure what you're doing is right, that you know all the possible outcomes.'"

"Be more educated and be a strong advocate for your baby," he added. "Because it's your baby, not the doctor's."

Asked why more medical professionals don't speak out, Melissa simply said "Career suicide."

"I don't even wanna be a nurse anymore," she said. "Why would I want to be? But I have to pay my bills."

"Doctors don't have any better education on vaccines than most 10th graders," she said. "Even as a nurse, we don't get the education. We just got the schedule."

She also said that medical examiners should have the right to test for vaccine injuries during the autopsy and identify them as a cause on the death certificate. "The vaccines are killing people and babies and they're trying to cover it up," she said.

While the couple said they found it helpful to share their story, they also admitted to wanting to keep a low profile. "It's kind of a quiet subject for us because we've got to protect ourselves now," Melissa said.

The couple is looking for a good support system. "We're looking for people to stand behind us and support us as we go through this journey, for the next questionable amount of years, to get justice for our baby. It might drag on for a while," Melissa said.

When asked about what gives them the strength to stand up and share their story, despite the backlash that such activism could invite, Melissa said:

> "This is the only way that I feel like I can mother my baby anymore. And my baby deserves justice. And we deserve to know the truth.
>
> "He is our reason for living right now. And he is our motivation."

Questions about the state medical examiner

Kreck told The Defender that state medical examiner Flomenbaum came from Massachusetts where he had been fired as the state medical examiner. "It looks like he tried to sue them for wrongful termination and lost," Kreck said.

Flomenbaum earned a national reputation as a top medical examiner through his work identifying bodies in New York City after the 9/11 attack in 2001, according to an article in the Portland Press Herald.

He was fired from his Massachusetts position for losing a body and having a backlog of bodies waiting to be examined.

In 2019, the Maine attorney general's office investigated and later cleared Flomenbaum over criticism that he was running a side business as a consultant in out-of-state death cases.

The Portland Press Herald article details more of Flomenbaum's controversial history, which included a Connecticut prosecutor's letter to then-Attorney General Jane Mills telling her that a judge had determined his testimony in a child manslaughter case was "not credible."

Flomenbaum was reprimanded in 2021 by Maine Governor Mills for inappropriate and unprofessional behavior in the workplace, after which he announced he would not be seeking reassignment to the position.

"He was only supposed to a month or so left of his term back then and he's still in office now. That all sounds very odd and fishy," Kreck said.

Melissa told The Defender that Flomenbaum had recently left the medical examiner's office, putting the disposition of Sawyer's remains in question.

The couple, with the aid of Health Choice Maine, is seeking to remove Sawyer's blood and tissue samples from the medical examiner's office.

Anyone with information about where a new location might be found to accommodate Sawyer's remains is encouraged to email Tiffany Kreck at tiffany@healthchoicemaine.org.

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John-Michael Dumais is a news editor for The Defender. He has been a writer and community organizer on a variety of issues, including the death penalty, war, health freedom and all things related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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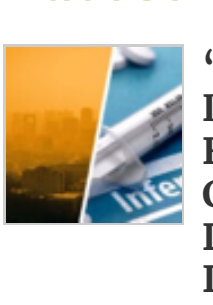

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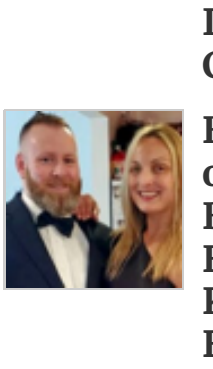

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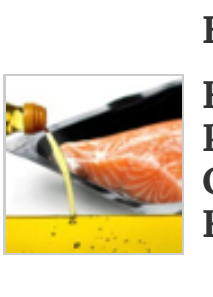

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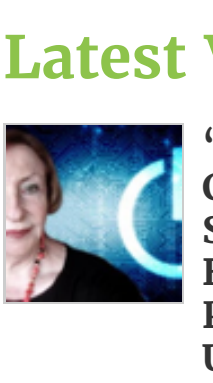

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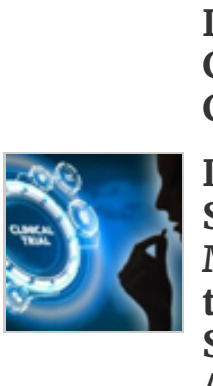

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